



State Board of Equalization

# News Release

**Vice Chair Michelle Steel**

**3<sup>rd</sup> District – Orange County**

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[www.boe.ca.gov](http://www.boe.ca.gov)

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## **BOE Notifying California Retailers of Upcoming Visits Letters Mailed to Businesses Located in 11 Zip Code Areas**

**Sacramento** – Retailers throughout the state are receiving letters from the California State Board of Equalization (BOE) notifying them about upcoming visits from Statewide Compliance and Outreach Program (SCOP) teams. SCOP visits are intended to educate retailers about properly reporting sales and use tax, increase compliance with tax laws, and maintain outreach efforts to assure taxpayers the state's tax system is fair and equal for all Californians.

The BOE is mailing letters to 8,105 business owners in the following zip codes: Culver City (90232), Pasadena (91105), Northridge (91325), Mission Viejo (92692), Ventura (93003), Antioch (94509), Belvedere (94920), Homewood (96141), Tahoma (96142), Carnelian (96140), and Tahoe City (96145).

Vice Chair Michelle Steel reminds retailers that they have specific legal rights as California taxpayers. These include a right to courteous and prompt service, to fair treatment, confidentiality, information and assistance, and a right to address their elected Board of Equalization member. "Taxpayers in Southern California who have questions or concerns about a SCOP visit can call my office directly at (949) 724-2578," says Ms. Steel.

Eight different SCOP teams located statewide (Oakland, Sacramento, San Jose, Van Nuys, Norwalk, Irvine, Riverside, and Ventura) conduct door-to-door, in-person visits in the zip code areas they cover. It is important for retailers to understand that the BOE asks only business-related questions, and does not inquire about personal financial information. Businesses found to be operating without a seller's permit are provided instructions on how to register with the BOE, as well as information about other necessary licenses. Home-based businesses are not visited.

Since 2008, SCOP has visited more than 376,500 businesses statewide to verify retailers are registered, and to ensure noncompliant businesses do not have an unfair advantage over registered businesses that are reporting their sales and use taxes and/or fees to BOE.

The BOE has found that nearly 98 percent of the California businesses are operating with the correct permits, and collecting the taxes and fees. However, under-reporting taxpayers, and the other two percent that are out of compliance, are among those responsible for more than \$2 billion in uncollected taxes contributing to the state's "tax gap" – the difference between the amount of taxes owed and the amount paid, negatively impacting all state taxpayers.

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If business owners have any questions about these upcoming visits, they may contact their local [BOE SCOP Team](#) or visit the BOE's SCOP Web page at [www.boe.ca.gov/sutax/SCOP\\_Overview.htm](http://www.boe.ca.gov/sutax/SCOP_Overview.htm).

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Elected to the Board of Equalization in 2006 and re-elected in 2010, Michelle Steel serves as *Southern California's elected taxpayer advocate*. In December 2007, Steel discovered the Board of Equalization had delayed the return of millions of dollars in security deposits owed to California businesses. Procedures were changed due to Steel's decisive leadership. Following her investigation, the tax agency refunded tax security deposits to over 5,500 small businesses. To date, over \$100 million in security deposits have been returned to taxpayers.

The five-member California State Board of Equalization (BOE) is a publicly elected tax board. The BOE collects more than \$53.7 billion annually in taxes and fees supporting state and local government services. It hears business tax appeals, acts as the appellate body for franchise and personal income tax appeals, and serves a significant role in the assessment and administration of property taxes. For more information on other taxes and fees in California, visit [www.taxes.ca.gov](http://www.taxes.ca.gov).

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